

India's Cancer Map 2025: Regional Trends, Risk Factors, and Key Health Programmes

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India's Cancer Map Latest News

- An analysis of data from 43 cancer registries shows India's lifetime risk of developing cancer is **11%**, with **15.6 lakh cases** and **8.74 lakh deaths** reported in 2024.
- These population-based registries, covering **10-18%** of the population across 23 states and Union Territories, track new cancer cases, deaths, and regional trends.
- Using 2015-19 data, researchers have identified critical patterns in cancer incidence, offering **valuable insights for health policy and planning**.

Key Trends in India's Cancer Burden

- An analysis of data from 43 cancer registries (2015-2019) recorded 7.08 lakh cancer cases and 2.06 lakh deaths.

- The study, conducted by researchers from leading institutions including AIIMS Delhi, Tata Memorial, and Adyar Cancer Institute, excluded 2020 data due to Covid's impact on health systems.

Gender Disparities in Cancer Cases and Deaths

- Women accounted for 51.1% of cancer cases but only 45% of deaths, largely because breast and cervical cancers — the most common among women — are more easily detectable and treatable.
- In contrast, cancers more common in men, like lung and gastric cancers, are harder to detect early and have poorer outcomes.

Rising Oral Cancer Cases

- Oral cancer has now overtaken lung cancer as the most common cancer in men, despite declining tobacco use (34.6% to 28.6% between 2009-10 and 2016-17).
- This rise is attributed to the long latency of tobacco's effects and additional risk factors such as alcohol consumption, which increases the risk of multiple cancers.

Northeast India: The Cancer Hotspot

- The highest incidence rates were recorded in the Northeast, especially Mizoram (21.1% lifetime risk for men, 18.9% for women).
- Factors include higher tobacco use, risky dietary habits (fermented pork fat, smoked meats, spicy food, hot beverages), and greater prevalence of carcinogenic infections like HPV, Helicobacter pylori, and hepatitis.

Geographical Spread of Cancer in India

- Cancer incidence shows strong regional variations.
- Breast cancer is highest in Hyderabad (54/100,000), while cervical cancer peaks in Aizawl (27.1).
- Lung cancer is most common among men in Srinagar (39.5) and among women in Aizawl (33.7), with high rates also in metro cities like Chennai, Delhi, Bengaluru, and Visakhapatnam.
- Oral cancer is most prevalent among men in Ahmedabad (33.6) and among women in East Khasi Hills (13.6), with high cases across western, central, and northern India.
- Prostate cancer is highest in Srinagar (12.7).

Policy and Healthcare Significance

- Findings underline the need for targeted cancer care programs, from screening and awareness campaigns to early detection and treatment.
- In the Northeast, comprehensive approaches — including stronger healthcare infrastructure, community engagement, and lifestyle changes — are critical.

Prevention and Early Detection

- With breast cancer alone contributing 30% of female cases, screening and awareness programs are essential.
- HPV vaccination and cervical cancer screening are vital given the high incidence of cervical cancer across registries.
- According to WHO, 30–50% of cancers are preventable through lifestyle changes and early detection, highlighting the importance of public health initiatives.

India's Key Programmes to Fight Cancer

- India has developed a **multi-pronged strategy** combining policy, infrastructure, financial aid, and research to combat the rising cancer burden.

National-Level Programmes

- **NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke):** Focuses on oral, breast, and cervical cancer screening, early detection, awareness, and infrastructure strengthening.
- **Strengthening of Tertiary Care for Cancer Scheme:** Establishment of 19 State Cancer Institutes (SCIs) and 20 Tertiary Cancer Centres (TCCCs) to decentralise advanced cancer treatment.
- **Ayushman Bharat Yojana (PM-JAY):** Provides free treatment (chemotherapy, radiotherapy, surgery) for poor families, covering over 90% of registered cancer patients.
- **Health Minister's Cancer Patient Fund (HMCPF):** Financial aid up to **₹15 lakh per patient**, ensuring affordable treatment at 27 Regional Cancer Centres.
- **National Cancer Grid (NCG):** World's largest cancer care network (287 centres) treating over **7.5 lakh new cancer patients annually**, ensuring standardised, evidence-based care.

Budget & Infrastructure Support

- **Union Budget 2025-26:** Allocated nearly **₹1 lakh crore** for health, including Day Care Cancer Centres in all districts, and **customs duty exemptions** on 36 lifesaving drugs.

Research & Innovation

- **NexCAR19 CAR-T Cell Therapy (2024):** India's first indigenous gene therapy for blood cancers, developed by IIT Bombay, Tata Memorial, and ImmunoACT.
- **Quad Cancer Moonshot (2024):** Collaboration with the US, Japan, and Australia to eliminate cervical cancer through HPV vaccination and screening.
- **ACTREC Expansion (2025):** Enhancing cutting-edge cancer research, treatment, and education facilities.

Awareness & Lifestyle Interventions

- Campaigns like **Eat Right India, Fit India Movement, and Yoga programmes** promote prevention through nutrition and fitness.
- **National Cancer Awareness Day and World Cancer Day** are used for mass awareness campaigns.

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